

REMARKS

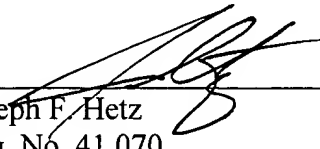
In this Preliminary Amendment, Applicants have amended the specification to add continuing information. Specifically, this application is a continuation of application number 08/723,853, filed September 30, 1996.

Applicants have also amended the specification and claims to make this application identical to U.S. patent application serial no. 09/032,087. The '087 application is also a continuation of the '853 application. There is an outstanding Office Action directed against the '087 application in which Claims 27-35, 38-49, 50-55, and 58-59 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fleischer, III et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,974,133) in view of London (U.S. Patent No. 5,590,184) and further in view of Staples et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,889,845). Additionally, Claims 36-37 and 56-57 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fleischer, III et al. in view of London and further in view of Bannister et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,548,636). Rather than file a three-month extension of time in the '087 application to respond to the outstanding Office Action, Applicants are filing this continuation application of the '853 application to continue the prosecution of the claims. Applicants submit that none of the cited references, alone or in combination, disclose each and every element of the claimed invention.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Marked-Up Version of The Paragraph on Page 4, Lines 26-31:

A service switching point (SSP) 12 serves a plurality of telephone lines 14, including a telephone line 16, a telephone line 18, and a telephone line 20. Another service switching point (SSP) 22 serves a plurality of telephone lines 24, including a telephone line 26, a telephone line 28, and a telephone line [30] 29. The SSPs 12 and 22 can be included within respective central offices or end offices of a public telephone system.

Marked-Up Version of The Paragraph on Page 5, Lines 17-24:

For the purpose of illustration, the telephone lines 16, 18, 20, 26, [and] 28, and 29 are members of a group which subscribes to the telecommunication service. The telephone lines 16, 18, 20, 26, [and] 28, and 29 can be the home telephone lines of fellow employees of a business, for example, which subscribes to the work-at-home telecommunication service. Associated with the group are an identification number used for billing the group's telecommunication calls and a carrier identification code to identify a telecommunication carrier to carry the group's telecommunication calls.